

## Don't let your foster child be left behind: The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

By Mitch Kremer,  
DCFS Education Advisor

Since its passage in 2001, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has created opportunities for some children in low-performing public schools. But services and funding differ, making it confusing to know exactly what NCLB can provide for your child.

The NCLB is supposed to provide a Public School Choice (School Choice) option for students attending public schools that have not met NCLB standards for two consecutive years. These children are conditionally eligible to transfer to a higher-performing school based on availability. The NCLB is also supposed to provide a Supplemental Educational Services (SES) option for students in public schools that have not met NCLB standards for three consecutive years.

Parents can contact schools directly to determine if their child's school has been identified for school improvement and is required to provide School Choice or SES. Also, before the start of the 2006-2007 school year,

schools that must offer either School Choice or SES are required to mail letters to parents who have children attending those schools.

### Public School Choice Process

With Public School Choice, a parent may choose to transfer the student to a higher performing school within the same district, if available, when the child's current school has not met NCLB standards for two years in a row.

- Prior to the beginning of each school year, districts must notify the parents of students in choice schools that they have the option of sending their children to a school in the same district that is not identified for school improvement, including public charter schools.
- Parents have 30 days from the date of notice to decide whether to exercise the choice option.
- Students who transfer to a school not in school improvement will be enrolled in the same manner as all other children at that public school.



- Districts must provide or pay for transportation to a school not in school improvement.
- If there are space or funding limitations, districts must give priority to the lowest achieving children from low-income families.
- If none of the schools in your district has met NCLB standards, there may be inter-governmental agreements with neighboring districts.

### Supplemental Educational Services (SES)

SES are defined in the NCLB as tutoring and other high-quality academic enrichment services provided, in addition to instruction during the school day, to increase the achievement of eligible children. A parent whose child is in a low performing school can choose either School

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## Left behind, con't.

Choice or SES, but not both. If School Choice is not available in the district, SES must be offered based on available funding.

- Prior to the beginning of the school year, school districts must annually notify parents, identify area providers, and provide a description of the services offered by each provider.
- Parents then have 30 days from the date of notice to decide whether to exercise the SES option.
- Schools must help parents select an SES provider, if help is requested.
- Schools in school improvement status must arrange for eligible students to receive SES from providers with a demonstrated record of effectiveness.
- If there is a space or funding limitation, districts must give priority to the lowest achieving children from low-income families.
- School districts are not required to pay for or provide transportation to supplemental educational services.

Foster parents working with a private agency may contact their agency's Education Liaison for assistance. Foster parents with DCFS and adoptive/guardianship parents may contact one of DCFS Education Advisors.

## Cook County Education Advisors:

### Chicago Central

Dawn Overend  
3718 W. Division  
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doverend@idcfs.state.il.us

### Chicago North

Deseree Edwards  
1911 S. Indiana  
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### Chicago South

Diane Fitzhugh  
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### Cook Suburbs: North, Central

Yasmina Sefiane-Johnson  
Maywood office  
708-338-6637  
Skokie office  
847-745-3008  
yasminajohnson@idcfs.state.il.us

### Cook Suburbs: South

Rebecca Lawrence  
Harvey office  
708-210-3051  
rlawrence@idcfs.state.il.us

## Help for high school readiness



Christine  
Feldman

The Northern Illinois University Education Access Project has a new program called the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Grade Project. Christine Feldman, DCFS Education Advisor,

and Leticia Nunez, a Transition Specialist, are researching the educational factors that predict high school success for DCFS eighth and ninth graders who attend Chicago Public Schools.

They are then monitoring the students' progress throughout their freshman year, working with caseworkers and caregivers to intervene and help students get a good start in high school.

The freshman year is a critical year since according to new research, students who complete their freshman year with one F or less in core subjects are five times more likely to graduate from high school.

Parents interested in learning practical strategies for helping students succeed in high school are welcome to attend one of the upcoming trainings, "Keys to High School Success—Tips for Parents". For more information, contact Christine Feldman at 773-292-7720 or Leticia Nunez at 773-292-7706.

## DCFS works with schools to offer additional supports

The DCFS Division of Service Intervention is dedicated to providing innovative programs to support education. Following are descriptions of programs that the Department and several providers offer in some Chicago and Cook County communities. Call the Office of Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959 for information on these and other programs.

### Project STRIVE

In March 2001, the Department inaugurated the Project STRIVE Network, which stands for Strategies To Rejuvenate Interest and Value in Education. The program is currently offered in 18 Chicago Public Schools, using three social service agencies.

A trained social worker is housed in the school to engage youth in their educational process. These youth are currently in DCFS care or have achieved permanency via adoption or subsidized guardianship. The worker performs a wide variety of functions depending upon the academic needs of the youth. Typically, the STRIVE worker connects and coordinates with the case manager from the private agency or DCFS. Because the STRIVE worker is familiar with the school workings, he or she can add a valuable perspective. The worker may counsel the student, attend staffings, initiate conferences with teachers, broker tutoring and other services, introduce a youth to an appropriate

activity sponsor, and/or help the youth to apply for either financial aid or scholarship opportunities. STRIVE staff also work intensely with youth who are truant and they encourage caregiver participation in the educational process.

### STRIVE schools

- Corliss High School
- Fenger High School
- Julian High School
- Alex Haley Elementary
- Bowen High School
- Calumet High School
- Clemente High School
- Englewood High School
- South Shore High School
- Phillips Academy
- Douglass Academy
- Oglesby Elementary
- Austin Academy
- Harper High School
- Robeson High School
- Parker Elementary
- Harold Washington Elementary
- Steinmetz High School
- Cleveland Elementary

Caregivers of students attending one of the above schools should contact a Cook County transition manager for assistance in making a referral to Project Strive.

### High School to College

The High School to College Program was established in October 2005 in collaboration with Uhlich Childrens Advantage Network (UCAN) to work directly with youth attending five Chicago Public Elementary and High

Schools. The purpose of the program is to assist youth in care to matriculate into high school and other post-secondary training programs. The program focuses on improving their academic and professional skills, ultimately improving their ability to function in a self-sufficient manner once they transition out of care.

Youth identify their academic goals, then staff assist by linking the youth with DCFS resources and existing programs/resources within their communities. In addition, the program provides opportunities and support by maintaining an ongoing relationship with the youth. The program will connect students with the professional training options available to them, and it will work with the youth both individually and in groups to promote better self-esteem, study habits, and social skills, as well as create positive peer networks within their schools. Youth who actively participate towards achieving their goals earn a monthly stipend.

The High School to College program is active in the following schools:

- Senn High School
- Kelvyn Park High School
- Sullivan High School
- Ames Middle School
- Mather High School

## DCFS puts Literacy Specialist Marguerite Chapman to the test

Located in the DCFS Cook South office on Emerald is a secret weapon. Marguerite Chapman is the only Certified Literacy Specialist in the state of Illinois at this time. She comes to DCFS by way of the Northern Illinois University Educational Access Project for DCFS. Through the Literacy Program, Chapman can assist children and the foster parents who support their educational progress. The right literacy techniques can boost a child's self-esteem, as well as help them pass the appropriate state exams. If the school has said that a young child is having problems with reading, the scenario usually goes like this:

Teacher: *"Your child does not know the alphabet and has no knowledge about reading. He cannot sit still, wants to play all day and is not ready for school. The student is so far behind I don't know where to start!"*

Parent: *"My child is not learning anything in school. The teacher complains that his adjustment is poor and he causes problems. He does not sit still for story time; he is unable to focus and has no prior knowledge of stories, etc."*

Teacher: *"This child will have to repeat the first grade!"*

With a call to Chapman, she can arrange a literacy screening to find the strengths and the skills that are missing. Once the

screening has been completed she will work with the school to better assist the child and get them back on track academically. These screenings are also available for older children and adolescents.

### Ongoing Literacy Workshops

Chapman also offers a series of ongoing literacy workshops where parents and children work together to help enhance learning skills. There will be three different workshops for all Elementary School students.

- I. Workshops for Kindergarten and First Grade. Students cannot pass to the First Grade unless they have specific knowledge of ABCs, counting, sitting still, and following directions, etc.
- II. Workshops for Third Grade. These students will be taking the new state test; they must pass this test before they go on to the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade.
- III. Workshops on the U.S. Constitution. Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade must pass the Constitution test before going on to High School.

These workshops will be held on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. to prevent children from missing school. For more schedule information please contact Marguerite Chapman at 773-371-6027 (office) 773-371-6067 (fax).



*Literacy Specialist Marguerite Chapman offered reading tips at the Caregivers Institute*

### Cook County Advocate reporters

#### Cook North ~ Sari Rowitz

312-328-2484 office  
312-328-2688 fax  
SRowitz@idcfs.state.il.us  
1911 S. Indiana Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60616

#### Cook Central ~ Joyce Hall

773-292-7700 office  
773-292-7861 fax  
JHall@idcfs.state.il.us  
3518 W. Division  
Chicago, IL 60651

#### Cook South ~ Jacquie Johnson

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JaJohnson9@idcfs.state.il.us  
6201 S. Emerald  
Chicago, IL 60621

Anyone can call the regional reporter with foster parent association news and schedules; local training notices; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.



## Cook Central Foster Parents get showered with thanks

It took months of planning by a group of dedicated staff in the Cook Central Region to plan the Foster Parent Appreciation Month celebration in May. The meetings were exciting and focused on the best ways to show appreciation to their valued partners in child welfare services.



*Cook Central foster parents enjoy themselves at this year's Foster Parent Appreciation Celebration.*

The Committee met twice monthly over the last few months to come up with creative ways to honor and acknowledge the caregivers who make such a crucial difference in the lives of children. The committee members are Paula Truitt-Alohan, team supervisor, Harold Dixon, Cook South RDM, Cora Lewis, Resources worker, Mayra Burgos, supervisor in licensing, and Joyce Hall, Regional Administrator.

Caregivers celebrated their work for children with a luncheon at the Cook Central regional headquarters at 3518 W. Division. Door prizes, plaques, certificates, and of course, great food, were just a few of the details that made the day special.

In a unique twist, the gathering also honored two foster parents from the Katrina-affected New



*Cook Central Regional Administrator Joyce Hall presents "chief decorator" Ella Smith a certificate of appreciation for her efforts.*

Orleans area. These foster parents had relocated to Illinois following the devastation of Katrina and were still fulfilling their mission of fostering children.

The entire Region joined in on the official recognition of the foster parents of the Cook Central Region.

## Cook Central Foster Children Get Set for Summer Activities



*Adrienne Welenc*

Adrienne Welenc, the lead foster parent support specialist for the Cook Central Region, "took care" of more than 120 children this summer. It's not that

she has a really big backyard, but a dedicated team that helped register kids for summer camp programs. Last winter, Adrienne became aware of programs being

offered by the City of Chicago Park District. These programs consist of spring break activities and summer day camp. The best news of all is that these programs are free to both children in foster care and children in intact family cases.

Cook County foster parents have been exceptionally diligent about enrolling their foster children in this incredible opportunity. Foster parents whose children are

eligible have enrolled their children in park district programs, YMCA programs, or Boys and Girls Clubs. Cook Central foster parents have "reached the mark" in assuring that our children have a safe and fun summer.

Thanks go out to Welenc and support specialists Denise Spires and Alice Couch, for their efforts in the region.

## **Cook South welcomed Delta sorority for family building event**

The Chicago Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. hosted the Delta Empowerment Fair: Empowering Families to Help Themselves. The fair was held on Saturday, May 6, at the Cook South office on Emerald. Admission was free.

The Delta Empowerment Fair included free health screenings and HIV/AIDS testing, a healthy lifestyle program introduced by NBC5's fitness expert, Saran Dunmore, fitness classes, seminars, and panel discussions.

Along with the events, there was a town hall meeting with city and state officials such as State Representative, Constance Howard and 16<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman, Shirley Coleman, on hand to provide information on pertinent community issues. The Empowerment Fair examined issues on housing, credit, employment and budgeting. Staff from DCFS and several different agencies were available for consultation. There was something for everyone, including an International Bazaar.

The Department and the Deltas were very happy to see so many foster family members and adoptive family members, as well as members of the community participating in the event.

## **Cook South and agencies team up to offer help for housing and jobs**

DCFS is always working in conjunction with many community agencies to make sure foster parents, adoptive parents and children have all the needed resources to have a successful future.

On April 29, 2006, DCFS and Metropolitan Family Services put their heads together and opened up their doors to the community. They had resources around housing, energy/utility assistance, information on health insurance, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, scholarships, after

school programs, literacy legal issues and more. Nearly 100 individuals attended, despite the rainy weather.

People from the community, intact families, and foster and adoptive families were in full force. The event was greatly appreciated. For future information on the event or vendors please call Carrie Pullie at 773-371-3667 or Ronald Wynne at 773-371-6112 LAN 86,87, and 82 (South Side of Chicago).

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## **Cook South links youth with jobs**

The DCFS Harvey Office and Family-to-Family Program held a Youth Summer Job Fair on May 19.

The young people were lined up outside waiting for the doors to open. Youth came ready with resumes, and some were even dressed to impress. These young people were ready to take their places in the workforce. Some of the vendors provided employment for the summer, and others long term. The job fair also

included a mandatory job training workshop on May 17.

The project was a collaborative effort between DCFS staff, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Link & Option Center, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

For information on employment services and future events, contact Valjean Langon at 708-331-4880 or Adrienne Taylor at 708-210-3578.

## Cook North field notes

### New Education Advisor

**Yasmina Sefiane** recently became the Education Advisor for the Cook Central and Cook North suburban areas. Sefiane has worked with the Educational Access Project for DCFS since August 1999. She was previously the Education Advisor in Cook South in the suburbs. Her office is currently located at the DCFS Maywood Office, and she can be reached at 708-338-6637.



*Yasmina Sefiane*

### Join the regional e-mail list

Often the region learns about community events, trainings and opportunities for interaction or finds some interesting information to share and pass along. The Cook North management team would like to share information with caregivers using e-mail.

Caregivers who wish to be added to a regional distribution list should send their e-mail address to [cjones4@idcfs.state.il.us](mailto:cjones4@idcfs.state.il.us). The region will also continue mailing information by regular mail.

## Cook County celebrates graduates

The three Cook County regions joined together to honor the achievements of the young people who graduated this school year. The celebration recognized those receiving high school diplomas and GED certificates, and those who completed trade schools, along with those graduating from college and junior college programs. In all, more than 300 young people from Cook County were invited to celebrate their academic successes.

“What these scholars have achieved academically also speaks volumes about their

personal achievements. The perseverance, confidence and hope that fueled them through schooling will also serve them well in life,” said Director Bryan Samuels.

A committee of eager staff from each Cook County region, the DCFS Office of the Guardian, DCFS Agency Performance Division, Cook Youth Advisory Board, DCFS Division of Communications, Chicago Area Project and co-chairs Sharon Thames and Gloria Orange-Long designed a beautiful celebration.

## Chicago BSW chapter honors families

The Chicago chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers honored five Cook County foster parents for their outstanding efforts in providing care to children. The families from DCFS and private agencies were honored on May first at a dinner. Congratulations go out to:

- Shirley Chapman is said to use her “old school” values to help the children learn to behave well, cook and become independent.
- Jeanetta Redmond is a relative caregiver who is not only taking care of her five grandchildren; she is helping their mother through her illness.
- Delores Cassell is a single parent to three grandchildren with special needs, and she is also caring for two-non-relative children with plans to adopt.
- Catherine Crawford has not only gone beyond the call for the children, she has done the same to advocate for birth parents.
- Leon and Donsetta Blakely have cared for over 100 children during more than 25 years as foster parents. They have adopted three children and are currently fostering a sibling group of three.



*Addie Hudson of DCFS and Chapter President Annette Wilson (R) congratulate foster parent honoree Catherine Crawford and Alemeta Rollins of Lawrence Hall*

# Cook County Training Calendar

## FosterPRIDE In-Service Modules

### COOK NORTH

#### Module 4 - The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Sexual Abuse

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**CHICAGO** *Harold Washington Coll.*  
Aug. 5 (Sat) and 9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Aug. 12 (Sat) 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

### COOK CENTRAL

#### Module 1 - Foundation for Meeting Developmental Needs of Children at Risk

(Four 3-hour sessions = 12 training hours)

**CHICAGO (Spanish)** *Association House*  
Sept. 16 & 23 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

#### Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**CHICAGO** *Kaleidoscope*  
Sept. 12, 14 & 19 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
(Tue/Thu)

### COOK SOUTH

#### Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**CHICAGO** *DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald*  
Aug. 19 (Sat) and 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Aug. 26 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

#### Module 4 - The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Sexual Abuse

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**CHICAGO** *Hull House*  
Aug. 2, 7 & 9 (M/W) 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

#### Module 6 - Working as a Professional Team Member

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**HARVEY** *DCFS Harvey Field Office*  
Sept. 20, 25 & 27 (M/W) 6:30 -9:30 p.m.

## Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hrs.

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six-hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

### COOK NORTH

**CHICAGO** *Harold Washington Coll.*  
Sept. 9 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**CHICAGO** *Irish American Ctr.*  
Aug. 16 & 21 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

### COOK CENTRAL

**CHICAGO (Spanish)** *Association House*  
Aug. 12 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**CHICAGO** *Kaleidoscope*  
July 18 & 20 (Tue/Thu) 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

### COOK SOUTH

**CHICAGO** *DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald*  
Aug. 12 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**CHICAGO** *FORUM*  
Aug. 29 & 31 (Tue/Thu) 6-9 p.m.

**CHICAGO** *Lutheran Social Svcs.*  
July 22 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**CHICAGO HEIGHTS** *Aunt Martha's*  
Aug 21 & 23 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**HARVEY** *DCFS Harvey Field Office*  
Sept. 11 & 13 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**MATTESON** *Illinois Mentor*  
Sept. 30 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

## Child and Family Team Meetings

This instructor-led on-line training is designed to help caregivers understand how a CFTM helps the family and ensures a permanent home for the child; how to prepare for a meeting; what happens between team meetings; and when team meetings are no longer needed in a case. **To register** for this three-hour training, foster parents may call the DCFS Registration Unit in the Office of Training at 877-800-3393. Participants may also register to attend CFTM-C training at computer labs in Springfield and Chicago by calling the same number.

*Aug. 16 (Wed)	8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.
On-line and Computer Lab	
227 So. 7 <sup>th</sup> , Springfield	
Aug. 19 (Sat)	8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Aug. 30 (Wed)	6:15 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
*Sept. 15 (Fri)	12:45 p.m. - 4 p.m.
On-line and Computer Lab	
6201 So. Emerald, Chicago	
Sept. 19 (Tue)	6:15 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Sept. 23 (Sat)	8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.

\*The two classroom trainings have been scheduled for those foster parents who do not have computers or only have dial-up service.

All classes are  
coordinated by  
Harold Washington  
College in Chicago.  
Call **312-553-5829**  
or **-5830** to register.